

Procedural Guide

0200-509.30

PRE-PLACEMENT STEPS: FOST-ADOPT AND ADOPTIVE PLACEMENTS

Date Issued: 12/04/12

☐ New Policy Release

☒ Revision of Existing Procedural Guide 0200-509.30, Pre-placement Steps: Fost-Adopt and Adoptive Placements, dated 08/22/07.

Revision Made: NOTE: Current Revisions are highlighted.

Non-substantive changes were made to this Procedural Guide.

Cancels: None

DEPARTMENTAL VALUES

Achieving timely permanence for every child in foster care is one of the Department's priorities. Giving instructions and guidelines for staff to transition children into a fost-adopt or adoptive home improves timelines to permanency for children.

WHAT CASES ARE AFFECTED

This Procedural Guide is applicable to all new and existing cases.

OPERATIONAL IMPACT

If following presentation of an unattached child's information for adoption, an approved applicant family confirms their desire to pursue fost-adopt/adoptive placement of that child, pre-placement steps shall be undertaken to transition the child into the new home. See Procedural Guide 0200-509.25, Presentation of Child Information to a Prospective Adoptive Family, for more information. Pre-placement steps are a series of scheduled contacts (e.g. visits, telephone calls, etc.) between the child and the prospective adoptive family designed to facilitate the fost-adopt/adoptive placement. They involve a dynamic process of moving from the known to the unknown for both the child and the prospective adoptive family and must occur for fost-adopt and adoptive placements.

Pre-placement steps consist of contacts of increasing duration between the child and the prospective adoptive parent(s). When developing placement steps, the following factors shall be considered:

- Child's age and level of maturity
- Child's placement history
- Current caregivers' ability to facilitate the transition
- Emotional impact on the child and prospective adoptive family
- Ability to schedule consecutive days for pre-placement visits
- Flexibility on the part of the prospective adoptive family and the current caregivers

Under Concurrent Planning Redesign (CPR), an Adoption and Permanency Resources Division (APRD) CSW is assigned early in the case to perform adoption-related activities. Thus, it is primarily the responsibility of the assigned APRD CSW, with the assistance of the Family Assessment Worker (previously known as Applicant ("A") CSW), to facilitate the pre-placement steps. The APRD CSW and the Family Assessment Worker or outside adoption agency social worker shall support the child, prospective adoptive family and current caregiver throughout this process and facilitate communication between all parties. The assigned APRD CSW and Family Assessment Worker or outside adoption agency social worker shall also maintain regular contact with the child, prospective adoptive family and one another during the pre-placement step period. **They shall maintain an on-going collaboration with the case-carrying CSW in this process.**

If the child's current caregivers appear willing and able to assist with the transition, the first placement step should occur at the child's placement. This allows the child's introduction to the prospective adoptive family to occur in a location that is safe for the child and encourages the prospective adoptive family and the caregiver to begin to form the partnership effort necessary for a smooth, successful transition. This partnership provides the child with positive messages that his or her current caregivers accept his or her prospective new family, that it is permissible for the child to begin attaching to the new family and that the pending move will be a good experience for the child. It also enables the prospective adoptive family to see the child in his or her current environment, to obtain information about the child from the current caregivers and to meet some of the people who are important to the child. See Procedural Guide 0200-501.25, Preparing Children for Adoption, for more instructions/information.

Procedures

A. WHEN: A PROSPECTIVE ADOPTIVE FAMILY DECIDES TO PURSUE PLACEMENT OF A PRESENTED CHILD

APRD CSW Responsibilities

1. In collaboration with the Family Assessment Worker, plan, schedule and facilitate the appropriate and necessary placement steps.

2. Involve the prospective adoptive family, current caregiver and child, if appropriate, in this process. See **Procedural Guide** 0200-501.25, Preparing Children for Adoption, for more specific instructions on preparing children and caregivers for the pre-placement visits.
3. Advise the current caregivers of their importance in the placement step process and acknowledge their feelings of ambivalence or loss.

NOTE: If it is assessed that the caregivers may be resistant to facilitating the transition, at least one of the CSWs from **APRD** or the outside adoption agency social worker shall be present at **each** pre-placement step to carefully monitor and guide the process. See **Procedural Guide** 0200-501.25, Preparing Children for Adoption, for more instructions, including instructions to follow when there are issues with the caregiver's behaviors.

- a) For the first pre-placement step:
 - i) Arrange for the first visit to occur at the child's placement if appropriate.
 - ii) Attend the first visit and introduce the child and caregivers to the prospective adoptive family and their social worker.

NOTE: It is important that at least one social worker is present during the initial pre-placement steps to provide support and determine the pace for future steps. While *both* the **assigned APRD** CSW and the Family Assessment Worker/outside adoption agency social worker **must** be present for the first visit and at least one social worker **must** be present for the next few steps, attendance at subsequent visits is a casework decision dependent upon the nature of the child's and family's adjustment.

4. Facilitate and ensure that subsequent pre-placement steps increase gradually in frequency and duration until the child is placed into the home unless there are concerns. Moving the child too quickly or too slowly can cause great anxiety.
 - a) Ensure that pre-placement steps occur as close together as possible. Children need consistent contact to make the gradual attachment to the new family. There is no maximum or minimum number of pre-placement steps.
5. Ensure that subsequent pre-placement steps progress from short day visits to longer day visits away from the child's current placement (e.g., a park, the zoo, the prospective adoptive family's home, etc.).

6. As pre-placement steps proceed, prepare the child and the caregiver before each visit and debrief them after each visit.
7. Gather information directly from the child, caregiver and prospective adoptive family to plan future steps.
8. If day visits are going well and the family and child are comfortable moving forward, schedule overnight visits in the prospective adoptive family's home.

NOTE: For a foster-adopt placement (parental rights have not been terminated for the child to be placed adoptively), overnight visits may **not** occur unless and until the prospective adoptive family is **either** licensed through CCL or certified by a licensed Foster Family Agency. **A match through PRU for a child who is not yet freed for adoption would always meet these licensure criteria. Families approved through PRU are dually licensed.**

9. If there are concerns about the pre-placement steps that can not be resolved with the CSWs involved or the outside adoption agency social worker, consult with the SCSW as soon as possible.

NOTE: It may be necessary to discontinue pre-placement steps if they do not appear to be in the best interests of the child. In contrast, if the placement steps seem to be going very well, there may be temptation to eliminate planned steps. Eliminating planned steps is often not in the best interests of the child or family. CSWs shall consult with their respective SCSWs to maintain objectivity and to prevent moving forward too quickly.

10. If the prospective adoptive family is from an outside adoption agency, assist the agency social worker in performing the responsibilities outlined in the Family Assessment Worker Responsibilities section.

11. Document all contacts in the Contact Notebook.

NOTE: Adoptive applicant(s)' information is confidential and shall be maintained/recorded in the adoption applicant case file only. No identifying and/or personal information about the prospective adoptive applicant/parent(s) shall be entered into CWS/CMS. This includes any discussion with the prospective applicant/parent(s) about his/her/their plan or progress toward adopting the child(ren) and all information obtained as part of the Applicant Adoption Assessment.

Family Assessment Worker Responsibilities

1. In collaboration with the assigned APRD CSW, plan, schedule and facilitate the appropriate and necessary placement steps, particularly working with the prospective family in the process.
 - a) When appropriate, advise the prospective adoptive parent(s) to bring an inexpensive gift for the child. Depending on the child's age, it may be appropriate for the family to bring a gift that encourages interaction (e.g., a game the child and family can play together).
 - b) Advise the prospective adoptive parent(s) to prepare a photo album that includes pictures of themselves, other children, pets and their home and to share the pictures with the child. This allows the child to become more familiar with his or her potential new family. The photo album may be left with the child between placement steps as a reminder of the family.
 - c) Collaborate with the assigned APRD CSW and the case-carrying CSW, as appropriate, in following the instructions listed under APRD CSW Responsibilities, step 1 a – e.
2. Follow step 3 under APRD CSW Responsibilities.

APPROVAL LEVELS

Section	Level	Approval
A	None	

OVERVIEW OF STATUTES/REGULATIONS

California Family Code Section 8621 states in pertinent part that the department shall adopt regulations regarding the provision of adoption services by the department, licensed adoption agencies and other adoption service providers, and shall monitor the provision of those services by licensed adoption agencies and other adoption providers.

California Department of Social Services, Manual of Policies and Procedures, Title 22, Division 2, Adoptions Manual, Subchapter 5, Section 35127.3, states that (a) The agency shall provide services to children who are accepted for adoption planing, including but not limited to:

- (1) Preventive and remedial medical care, including mental health services.
- (2) Obtaining medical reports and the medical background of the child.
- (3) Services pertaining to the placement of the child for adoption, the emotional preparation of the child for adoption and working through losses and separations.

- (4) Services pertaining to supervision of the adoptive placement.
- (5) Preparation and completion of the Adoption Placement Agreement.
- (6) Preparation and completion of the Adoption Assistance Agreement, when necessary.
- (7) Determination of the AAP payment level, when necessary.
- (8) Re-certification of the Adoption Assistance Agreement, when necessary.
- (9) Freeing the child for adoption.

LINKS

California Code	http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw.html
Division 31 Regulations	http://www.cdss.ca.gov/ord/PG309.htm
Title 22 Regulations	http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/ord/PG295.htm
Adoptions Manual	http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/ord/PG308.htm

RELATED POLICIES

[Procedural Guide 0200-507.10](#), Identifying a **Prospective** Adoptive Family For a Child Through The Placement and Recruitment Unit (PRU)
[Procedural Guide 0200-509.20](#), Pre-Placement Conference
[Procedural Guide 0200-509.25](#), Presentation of Child Information to a Prospective Adoptive Family
[Procedural Guide 0200-509.35](#), Adoptive Placement
[Procedural Guide 0200-501.25](#), Preparing Children for Adoption

FORM(S) REQUIRED/LOCATION

HARD COPY	None
LA Kids	None
CWS/CMS:	Contact Notebook
SDM	None